

There must be HERESIES.

A
S E R M O N
Preach'd before the
University of Oxford,
A T
St. M A R T' s,
O N
SUNDAY, September 2, 1733.

By EDWARD BALLARD, B.D.
and Fellow of Trinity-College in Oxford.

Artes Arianorum, & ingenium occupandis Principibus, Catholicis opprimendis, sectæ suæ firmandæ, ac diffundendæ in pluribus emicuerunt. Siquidem notata in Ariani Dissimulatio, & Dolus. — Observata in illis Perfidia. — Accessit in fide Inconstantia. — Adde fædam in Aulis Adulationem, — Artes inescandi Principes Fœminas testibus Historicis, Theodoro, & Cæteris: Cum primis Arianorum Artes in præcipuis Episcopatibus invadendis Ambitionem immodicam ut rursus confirmant superiores Historici, & ipse quoque Sulpicius Severus. Hist. Lib. II. Frid. Spanhem. Hist. Christianæ Sæc. 4^{tum}. Pag. 385, 386.

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THE

PREFACE.



THE unhappy Circumstances we at present lie under, with regard to Arianism and Infidelity, seem to require at Our Hands, more especially (who are called to be the Ministers of Christ, and Stewards of the Mysteries of God) a publick Confession or Declaration of our Faith, as a Testimony

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testimony of our Christian Fidelity ; and such is one End and Intent of this Discourse. By which, I am not so vain as to expect to convince such Gainfayers, as have already resisted the Force and Evidence of the many pious and learned Arguments, which have been urged in Defence of Christianity, and the more Important Doctrines of it ; but shall own my self extremely satisfied, if I only obtain the Approbation and Favour of sincere and honest Inquirers after Truth ; for whose Benefit chiefly this Discourse was intended : For next to the Satisfaction of being approved of in our own Consciences, is the Pleasure of being approved and made manifest in the Consciences of others.

It

The PREFACE.

It is no Wonder, that evil Men and Seducers, should insinuate themselves, and creep into Places more immediately set apart for Religion and Learning; since there is no way more effectual for them to obtain their Ends, viz. the Ruin and Destruction of this our Sion, than by tainting and corrupting the Fountains of her Waters.

But God be praised, the Designs of these Deceivers have been detected, and their Persons discovered: They who troubled us, have been rejected, cut off, and spewed out of our Societies. And, I trust, that the same good Providence which has so lately defeated and brought to nought those Evils, which the Craft and Subtilty

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Subtilty of the Devil and Men
worked against us, *will still guard
and protect us against such as have
evil Will at Sion ; will always de-
liver us from Heresy and Schism,
from Hardness of Heart, and
Contempt of God's Word and
Commandment.*



St. PAUL'S



St. PAUL'S first Epistle to
the *Corinthians*, Chap. xi.
ver. 19.

*For there must be also Heresies
among you, that they which
are approved, may be made
manifest.*

IF we examine the Context,
we shall find, that several Di-
visions and Contentions had
arose in the Church of *Co-
rinth*, which had reach'd our Apostle's
Ears; and for which he condemns them
in the Verses preceding and following
my Text. But so far was he from being
surprized at this Report, that he easily
gives Credit to it, as a Thing that might
reasonably be expected among Men of
disse-

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different Fancies and Humours, different Tempers and Constitutions, and, at the same Time, declares, in the Words of my Text, that *there must be also Heresies among them*; Schisms and Divisions of an higher and more dangerous Nature than what he reprehended them for; and that such Heresies were providentially design'd, or permitted to be broached for certain very wise Ends and Purposes, that they *which are approved, might be made manifest*.

It has, in all Ages, been a very great Objection to the Christian Faith, that the Professors of it were split and divided into many different Sects and Parties: And, indeed, there was Occasion given for this Remark, even in the very Infancy of Christianity. The *Corinthians*, many of them, had no sooner embraced the Gospel, but Nature began again to work in them, and they presently forgot *what Manner of Spirit they were of*. One says, *I am of Paul*; another, *I am of Apollos*; another, *I am of Cephas*; whereas they were, or ought to have been *all one in Christ Jesus*.

But that this Objection of the Divisions among Christians, holds against the Truth of Religion it self, is so far from being allowed, that, we affirm, it rather
tends

tends to illustrate and clear up the undoubted Authority of it, in that it so remarkably verifies and proves the Completion of the many Prophecies concerning such Divisions, as the Scripture had said should happen. *It must needs be*, says our blessed Saviour, *that Offences come*; though, at the same Time, he adds, *Wo be to that Man by whom they come*^a. And St. Paul addressing himself to the Ephesians, says, *Of your own selves shall Men arise, speaking perverse Things, to draw away Disciples after them*^b; and St. Peter, in his second general Epistle^c, *There shall be false Teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable Heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift Destruction: And many shall follow their pernicious Ways, by Reason of whom the Way of Truth shall be evil spoken of*: And St. Paul, in the Words of my Text, not only shews, that *Offences must come*, that there must be Heresies, but likewise proves that they are ordain'd, or rather suffered to come, for weighty and prudential Reasons; and for this more especially; *that they which are approved may be made manifest*.

^a Matt. xviii. 7.

^b Acts xx. 30.

^c Chap.

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From these words I shall shew ;

First, That, in the ordinary Course of Things, such Divisions will happen ; *There must be Heresies.*

Secondly, That such Things are allowed, or permitted by God, to be in the Church for wise and prudent Ends ; and for this more particularly ; *That they which are approved may be made manifest.* And,

Thirdly, and lastly, That therefore it is no Objection to the Christian Church in general, or to ours in particular, that there are Schisms, or even Heresies among the Professors of it.

First then, I am to shew, that in the ordinary Course of Things, such Divisions will happen : *There must be Heresies.*

And here I shall, by the Way, premise, that though the Word *ἑρέσις*, which we render, or call, Heresy, in the large Acceptation of it, very often signifies only a Sect, or Party ; yet it is here taken in a stricter Sense, and may be understood to denote an obstinate persisting

sisting in some fundamental Error, in Point of Faith or Practice; so that many Persons may err, or mistake in lesser Matters, and yet not deserve the Name of Hereticks. Thus much for the Sense and Meaning of the Word. To proceed,

Were we to suppose Mankind, by a natural Propensity, or by an absolute Necessity, to be inclined to Vertue and Religion; (which, by the Way, would destroy the Freedom of human Actions, and consequently Religion itself;) then, indeed, might we expect the most perfect Harmony and Agreement; that *every one would be joined together in the same Mind, and the same Judgment:* But the Estimate we must here make, must be taken from the general Observations on the Practice and Manners of Mankind; which, I fear, will be found so vitiated and corrupted, as to give us little Reason to promise our selves such glorious Fruits from them.

A very little Reflection on the State and Condition of human Nature, will teach us, that we are generally govern'd more by our Passions and Appetites, than we are by our Reason and Religion. Every one, almost, has his favourite Vice; to the satisfying of which, every Thing must become subservient. Not

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but that it must be allow'd possible for us, by the Assistance of God's Grace, to get the Victory over our selves, *to be strong in the Lord, and the Power of his Might*; yet may we, I fear, with too much Reason, conclude, from the Generality of Mankind, that, *though the Harvest is great, yet the Labourers are few; though many are called, yet few are chosen.*

For, how does Pride, and the Affectation of Singularity, very often undermine the strongest Vertue, and turn the wisest Head? The higher any Person is in the Opinion of the World, the more likely is he to grow giddy by his Advancement, and so, by disdaining to follow others, becomes himself, at length, the Setter forth of *strange Doctrines*: To the Error of such an one may be imputed the Fall of Thousands; who, however averse they may seem to be to implicit Faith, will sooner choose to err with their great Master, than suffer the least Imputation to be cast on his Conduct, or their own Judgment. Again,

Does not Interest, the God of this World, blind the Eyes, pervert the Judgment, and give a wrong Bias to the Understanding and Will? Were it
not

not so, we should not have seen so many Errors advanced, so many *Hereses brought in*, directly repugnant to the Sense and Tenor of Scripture, as well as to the very Spirit and Life of Christianity. Are Men vicious in their Morals? They will be loose in their Principles: Doctrines will be found to countenance Vice and Immorality; and Iniquity it self be established by a Law.

As long therefore as Men are under the Dominion of Pride, influenced and governed by Self-interest and worldly Views, we may reasonably expect Differences in Opinion, Schisms, and Divisions among them, according to the different Humours, Inclinations, and Bent of Mankind. Thus may we conclude with the Apostle, that *there must be Hereses*; that such Accidents, in the ordinary Course of Things, will happen; and that they are providentially designed, or permitted, to be in the Church, for very wise and prudent Ends; for this in my Text more particularly: That *they which are approved may be made manifest*, was the second Thing proposed to be consider'd.

Secondly, That God Almighty should bring Light out of Darkness, Good out of Evil,

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Evil, is no uncommon Doctrine in the School of Christianity. He certainly governs and presides over all Events; turns and directs the Counsels of Men, according to the Dictates of his own unerring Wisdom; and often makes even the Passions and Infirmities of Mankind, the Instruments of displaying his own Power and Glory: *His Strength*, as the Apostle expresses it ^d, *is made perfect in our Weakness*: And the Psalmist ^e; *Surely the Wrath of Man shall praise thee; the Remainder of Wrath shalt thou restrain*. Out of our Confusion God produces Order; as the dividing of Tongues was designed to people the World.

The shameful Fall of *Peter*, proved to himself, and others, a standing Conviction of the Weakness and Insufficiency of our strongest Resolutions and Endeavours, without the concurrent Assistance of God's Grace; whilst his rising again, by an hearty and sincere Repentance, displays to us the *Riches of God's Goodness, Forbearance, and Long-suffering*; and points out the Way, whereby the greatest Offenders may be reconciled to God, and restored to his Favour.

^d 2 Cor. xii. 9.

^e Psal. lxxvi. 10.

Thus

Thus what at first seems a Blot in the Character of this Apostle, is washed away by his future Constancy and Amendment; and, by the Blessing of God, *his Fall* may prove the Means of our *Standing*.

In like Manner did the malicious Design of the *Jews*, to suppress Christianity, by persecuting the Author of it, most effectually supplant it self, and tend to the greater Manifestation of the Truth of the Gospel; so that *to the Blindness in Part, which happened unto Israel, we may justly impute, in Part, the Fullness of the Gentiles*^f.

Thus the early Attempts that were made on the Truth and Doctrines of Christianity, spurred up the Zeal and Industry of many, who thought their Duty to hold fast the Form of sound Words, and to contend earnestly for the Faith once delivered to the Saints. To the Errors of *Cerintus* we are indebted for the heavenly Doctrine of St. *John's* Gospel: To the Heresy of *Arius*, for the pious Labours of St. *Athanasius*; and to the Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity (so modestly entitled by its Author) for the learned Defence and Vindication of Christ's Di-

^f Rom. xi. 25.

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vinity. By these Means, from the Opposition of Error, Truth became more conspicuous. And, as in the Times of Persecution, *the Blood of the Martyrs became the Seed of the Church*; her seeming Losses were, in the End, her real Gain; so from the *falling away of some*, others are more confirmed and established, *keep themselves in the Love of God, and are built up on their most holy Faith*^s. To this we may add an Observation very lately made by an ingenious Defender of reveal'd Religion; "*That, from the Variety of Sects, which sprung up in the very earliest Ages, opposing and hating each other; a constant Guard was occasion'd against Imposture and Corruption from any Hand, in the genuine Writings of the New Testament*"ⁿ. And a little before, he argues; "*That the Detection of some Frauds gives us a Security; that other Books, which concern our Religion, and against which no Objection can be made, are genuine*"ⁱ.

And, as to one Book of the New Testament, which is the Revelation of

^s Jude ver. 20.

ⁿ Dr. Coneybear's Defence of Revealed Religion,

p. 314.

ⁱ Ibid. p. 312.

St. *John*, it deserves a special Remark; that when it was heretofore questioned, whether or no it was a genuine apostolical Remain, the Church of *Rome*, by her Testimony, help'd to keep it in the sacred Canon, and so contributed to the preserving and perpetuating of a Testimony against her self in the Days of her Apostasy.

And here I may, with great Pleasure, observe, that the bold Attacks which have been, of late, made on the Truth of Christianity, have only tended to its further Illustration; whilst so many have been, by this Means, provoked to enter the Lists against our Adversaries, to shew the Weakness and Folly of their *Grounds and Reasons* on which their Infidelity is built, to set forth and display the Insufficiency of human Reason, as it now subsists among us, to serve the Ends of Mankind; and consequently from hence have justly argued, not only the Expediency, but the Necessity also, of a superior Help, a Revelation of God to Mankind.

That the Writings of the Old and New Testament are the revealed Will of God, has, I think, been sufficiently proved, both from their internal Excellency, as well as the external Evidences

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of their Derivation from God : And what have all the Arguments, against the Miracles of our Saviour, appear'd to be, but the Effects rather of a distemper'd Brain, than of a serious rational Way of Thinking ? Our Adversaries then must excuse us, if we are not willing to part with a Religion, that has stood the Test of One thousand seven hundred Years Examination ; that is so well calculated to promote our present, as well as our future Happiness, without having an equivalent Scheme offer'd us, that shall be attended with equal, if not greater Advantages ; and we are contented to hold our Christianity no longer, than till such a Scheme is produced.

Having thus, I hope, sufficiently shew'd, that *there must be Heresies*, and that such Things are allowed, or permitted, by God, to be in the Church, for wise and prudent Ends, I proceed, in the third and last Place,

Thirdly, To prove (what indeed seems almost consequentially to follow from the two first Heads of my Discourse) that it is no Objection to the Church in general, or to ours in particular, that there

are Schifms, or even Heresies, among the Professors of it.

In the Descriptions, which our blessed Saviour gives us of his Church or Kingdom, here upon Earth, we find it sometimes compared to a *Net cast into the Sea, which gathered of every Kind*^k; sometimes to a *Field*, wherein Tares, as well as Wheat, spring up^l; and to *ten Virgins, whereof five were wise, and five were foolish*^m; strongly implying by these, and the like Similitudes, that a perfect Harmony and Agreement was not to be expected in this probationary State; but that *bad* as well as *good*, *Tares* as well as *Wheat*, *foolish* as well as *wise*, should continue together till the End of the World.

And agreeable to this, we find, that our Saviour had no sooner chosen his twelve Apostles, but one of them (*Judas Iscariot*) prov'd a *Devil*, the Betrayer of his Lord and Master; another *denied him* at his Apprehension; and *the rest forsook him and fled*. All, indeed, except the Traytor return'd to their Allegiance and Duty, and made amends for their past Weakness and Despondency, by their fu-

^k Matt. xiii. 47.

^l Ver. 24.

^m Chap. xxv. 1, &c.

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ture Courage and Resolution, counting not even their Lives dear unto them; so that they might finish their Course with Joy; and the Ministry, which they had received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the Grace of Godⁿ.

But here it must be confessed, that Peter and Barnabas (after our Lord's Ascension into Heaven) seemed, as St. Paul expresses it, to be removed to another Gospel; and fearing them which were of the Circumcision, dissembled their Christian Liberty, and withdrew and separated themselves from the Society of the Gentile Converts^o; thereby countenancing a very dangerous Schism in the Christian Church, building again the Things which they had destroy'd^p, encouraging, by their Conduct, the Observance of Circumcision, and consequently the whole Jewish Law; and thereby frustrating the Grace of God. For if Righteousness come by the Law, then Christ is dead in vain^q. St. Paul tells us, that for this Behaviour of Peter, he withstood him to the Face^r; and publicly reprov'd him as a Person worthy to be

ⁿ Acts xx. 24. ^o Gal. i. 6. Chap. ii. 12. ^p Ver. 18.
^q Ver. 21. ^r Ver. 11.

blamed;

blamed; that walked not uprightly, according to the Truth of the Gospel: Which Proceeding of St. Paul, though it set Things right for the Present in the Church; yet it made some Noise abroad in the World; and the acute and subtle Enemy of Christianity, *Porphyry* himself, was not wanting to lay hold of this Objection against it; and endeavour'd to make it appear as a Compact of Forgery and Deceit, while the Princes of the Church did thus fall out among themselves. And this Argument we find reviv'd by a late Writer, against the Christian Religion. An Objection that might have been of great Force, had the two Apostles obstinately persisted in their Error, or pretended a divine Commission for what they thus countenanced and encouraged by their Practice: This, indeed, might justly have stagger'd the Faith of many in Christ, when the main *Witnesses* of the Truth of it agreed so ill together. But (as they soon gave up their Opinion, and acquiesced in the Judgment of the Church, from which they had so remarkably deviated, as we may, I think, fairly conclude they did, by

^f Gal. ii. 14.

their

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their not defending and maintaining their Error, or continuing in a State of Separation;) the only proper Use that can be made of this Objection, is, that the Apostles were, what they confessed themselves to be, *Men of like Passions* with the rest of Mankind; and consequently without a divine Interposition, subject to the Frailty and Weakness of human Nature, and liable to be *drawn away and enticed*. And this Consideration, one would think, should teach the Church of *Rome* not so arrogantly to assume to herself Infallibility; when *Peter* himself, from whom she claims it, was suffered by the Providence of God, so remarkably to fall.

What therefore rests upon our Adversaries to prove, is, that the Errors and Failings charged upon the Apostles, were sufficient to invalidate the Force and Credibility of their Evidence; and that, though they sacrificed all that was dear unto them, in Defence of the Truth of Christianity, yet their main Design was to impose upon the World, and to propagate an Imposture. When they have satisfactorily proved to the World the Truth of
these

these two Propositions, we shall be forced to subscribe to their Opinion, and to acknowledge that the Doctrine of the Gospel stands but upon a very weak Foundation: But, till they have proved these, we shall think our selves obliged to believe, that Differences and Disputes were at first suffer'd to be in the Church, to serve the wise Ends of Providence, as they were the more immediate Occasion of an Apostolical Decree in this Matter, and probably put *St. Paul* himself upon writing his admirable Epistles to the *Galatians*, and to the *Romans*; wherein he so plainly proves the Necessity of Faith in Christ, in direct Opposition to the Observance of the Ceremonial Law, and thereby, probably put a Stop to that Opinion, which had so much prevailed among the *Jewish* Converts.

And we shall likewise farther think our selves obliged to believe, that that admirable Courage, Constancy, and Resolution, which animated the Apostles, and made them rejoice in *Persecutions for Christ's sake and the Gospel's*, spoke them to be more than Men; that they stood not in their own Strength, but in the Power of God; that their Faith enabled

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enabled them to overcome the World,
to be more than Conquerors through
Christ.

Thus have we seen, that even in the Time of the Apostles, Differences and Divisions arose in the Church; which were so far from destroying the Truth, as it is in Jesus, that they rather proved the Means of the Gospel's being deliver'd down more pure unto us, and by being the Occasion of obviating the Errors of some, prevented, or removed the future Scruples of many.

Thus were the Doctrine of *Ebion*, *Cerintbus*, and the *Nicolaitans*, guarded against by St. *John*; and the very Company and Conversation of such Persons, shunned and avoided by him: And we find *Hymeneus* and *Philetus*, marked out, and characterized by St. *Paul*, as the Authors of *profane and vain Babblings*; whose Words are said to eat as does a Canker; which, from seizing a Part, usually infects the whole Body.

If then the Christian Church was preserved and maintained, notwithstanding the many different Opinions which arose in the Apostolick Age, we may fairly

* 2 Tim. ii. 16, 17.

presume, that the same wise Providence which had engaged to *be with her always, even unto the End of the World,* would still be her Defence and Protection, and *never suffer the Gates of Hell to prevail against her.*

Accordingly we find, that as every Age almost, has had its favourite Heresy, so there have not been wanting fit and able Men to do God Service, to fight his Cause, and to suffer, as well as write for the Truth of the Gospel. It would be endless, as well as unnecessary, to mention here the many pious and learned Advocates, which have appeared in Defence of Christianity, or the sound Doctrines of it, in Opposition to the *Gnosticks, the Novatians, the Arians, the Nestorians, the Eutychians,* and the like; their Names and their Works having been so carefully collected and descanted upon, by a very able and faithful Hand^u. I shall only observe, That of all the Heresies which have ever infested the Church of Christ, no one has given so great a Scandal and Offence to Christianity, has so paved the Way to Atheism and Infidelity, as the *Arian*;

^u Cave. — *Historia Literaria.*

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no one, like that, has so disturbed the publick Peace, and occasion'd Disorders and Convulsions, both in Church and State: And for this a very obvious Reason may be offer'd; if we may credit what Historians tell us of the Professors of this Doctrine; which is, that they were noted for "*Craft, Perfidiousness, Inconstancy, reproaching the Orthodox, flattering Princes, and aspiring after the highest and most beneficial Stations in the Church*". And 'tis remarkable, that our modern *Arians* have too closely trod in the Steps of their great Predecessors, have shewn themselves to be as well versed in all the subtle Arts of advancing themselves, and of imposing upon the World.

For are not Subscriptions daily made, and Assent and Consent declared in the most solemn Manner, by these, and such like Persons, to what they neither believe in their Hearts, nor conform to in their Lives and Conversations? A very convincing Argument this, of their *Sincerity, by which they are to be entitled to the Favour of God!*

Yet, how many *filly unstable Souls* have we seen *led Captive*, by their Appearance of Sanctity, by their putting on the

Form of Godliness? And how justly may our Church complain, that *her Enemies are they of her own Household*; that they which *have eat Bread with her*, have been fed and maintained by her Bounty, and joined with her in the most solemn Act of Communion and Fellowship, have *lifted up their Heel against her*?

To be treated ill by our professed Enemies, is what we may expect, and be prepared for; but to be betray'd by our seeming Friends, is what we cannot possibly guard against, is an Aggravation of their Guilt, and our Sufferings: *For it was not an Enemy* (says the royal Psalmist) *that reproach'd me, then I could have borne it; neither was it he that hated me, that did magnify himself against me, then I would have bid my self from him. But it was thou, O Man, mine Equal, my Guide, and mine Acquaintance. We took sweet Counsel together, and walked unto the House of God in Company*^x.

Hence we may conclude, that the greatest Misfortune that can happen to the Church, is, not her having Sons that revolt from her, and oppose her Doctrines with heretical Notions, and are,

^x Psal. lv. 12, 13, 14.

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for that Reason, excommunicated from her, or, at least, absent themselves from her Communion; but her having deceitful Members, that, under the specious Shew and Appearance of a feigned Submission and Compliance with her Doctrines and Worship, lie in her Bosom on purpose to rend her Bowels. Let us hear how St. Paul exhorts us to demean our selves towards such Persons: *I beseech you, Brethren, mark them which cause Divisions and Offences, contrary to the Doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them: For they that are such, serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own Belly; and by good Words, and fair Speeches deceive the Hearts of the Simple^v.*

To sum up all in a few Words; we have seen how necessary and unavoidable Differences and Divisions are in the Christian Church, considering the Nature and Constitution of Things and Persons, in this imperfect State; and that by these Means, the Wisdom of God as well as the Integrity of Man, are oftentimes display'd and made manifest; And the Use we should make of these Consi-

^v Rom. xvi. 17, 18.

derations,

derations, should be what the Apostle advises^{us} to, not to be terrified by our Adversaries; but to stand fast in one Spirit, with one Mind, striving together for the Faith of the Gospel^z: To speak boldly as we ought to speak; to be as wise in our Generation as the Children of this World are in theirs^a; as Industrious and Active in a good Cause, as they are in a bad one; using double Diligence, and redeeming the Time, because the Days are Evil^b.

And if, after all, it should be objected, that there are still Heresies and Schisms among us, let us silence Gain-sayers, and comfort and encourage our selves with the words of St. Paul to Timothy^c; where he compares the Church of Christ to a large Family; In a great House (says he) there are not only Vessels of Gold and of Silver, but also of Wood and of Earth; and some to Honour, and some to Dishonour. If any Man therefore purge himself from these (Scandals and Offences, just before mention'd) he shall be a Vessel unto Honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's Use, and prepared unto every good Work. Let us therefore humbly be-

^z Phil. i. 27, 28.

^a Eph. vi. 20.

^b Chap. v. 16.

^c 2 Tim. ii. 20, 21.

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Seech Almighty God, with his continual Pity, to cleanse and defend his Church; and because it cannot continue in safety without his Succour, that he would preserve it evermore by his Help and Goodness; that, being delivered from false Apostles, it may be ordered and guided by faithful and true Pastors, through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, three Persons in one glorious Godhead, be ascribed, as is most due, all Honour, Power, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, now, and for ever. Amen.

FINIS.



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